

Comparisons are inevitable. Myrdal, at the request of the Carnegie Trust, set out to make an objective survey of the contemporary condition of the American Negro. Davie sets out to place contemporary Negro-white relations "within the framework of cultural history." He starts from the cultural background of the Negro's African origin and traces the development of institutions and attitudes through slavery, emancipation, reconstruction, industrialization, and two world wars. This does not mean that he ignores the contemporary, he merely places it in its proper historical perspective. This book is intended as a text-book, as Davie says in the preface, and as such is eclectic; he uses Myrdal as a major source, but his presentation of even this material is different and perhaps better than Myrdal's own. As Davie himself says, Myrdal holds that the main solution lies rather in an appeal to values and attitudes of the individual than in a change in the social environment.

"This view proceeds logically from the fact that he regards the Negro problem as primarily a moral issue; it has its existence in the white American's mind. Hence the solution, he thinks, lies largely in changing the latter's attitudes. . . . He holds that the explanation of social change is to be found more in people's beliefs and valuations than in terms of natural forces and material trends. Thus he would believe that a direct rational attempt to point out the errors of the white man's ways . . . would have more effect than . . . for example, the general education of Negroes" (pp. 503-4).

Davie sees clearly that although psychological attitudes are of importance in themselves they may be, and often are, rationalizations for economic necessity; in America as in Africa the cry of "race purity" is sometimes synonymous with "cheap labour."

Davie also considers race relations in America as part of the world picture: "If the situation of the black man is heaven in Brazil, it is purgatory in the United States, and hell in South Africa."

On the "Doctrine of Racial Inferiority" Davie endorses Klineberg's view that there is no scientific proof that Negroes are

innately inferior. Such inferiority as they may appear to show he relates to the environment. *Applied Eugenics*, by Popehoe and Johnson, an unfortunately named work, which maintains the racial inferiority of Negroes on arguments based on African "evidence," receives destructive criticism both concise and effective. In a chapter on "Race Mixture" he notes the wideness of the American definition of Negro, and his examples of the term's anomalous application lend conviction to his view that if the concept of race as applied to the American Negro has any meaning at all it is sociological rather than anthropological. Herskovits's idea of the emergence of the brown American as an homogenous race he leaves as an open question. Linton's conviction that the Negroes will in 200 years have been assimilated and so solved the problem he regards as unlikely, especially now that "passing" and miscegenation seem to be declining, and Boas, who once suggested that it was in the interest of American society to encourage the marriage of white men and Negro women in the hope of assimilation, is gently rebuked for leaving Negro males entirely out of consideration.

An entirely readable book, mercifully without footnotes, but with ample annotated bibliography and good index, Professor Davie's work provides both an excellent introduction and a useful reference on perhaps the most vital problem of present-day society.

RONALD FRANKENBERG.

## STATISTICS

**Hill, A. Bradford.** *Principles of Medical Statistics*. Fifth edition. London, 1950. The Lancet Ltd. Pp. x + 282. Price 10s. 6d.

THIS excellent little text-book has now reached its fifth edition. It can be unreservedly recommended to anyone without statistical training and anxious to acquire either a basic understanding of statistical thought or an equipment of simple and

practical techniques. It is made specially attractive to the medical man by the fact that so many examples are drawn from medical data. Many of these are highly interesting in their own right. However, anyone who works in a biological field would find the subject matter and presentation

entirely to his taste. The book is not suitable for reference purposes; and if, for instance, one wished to look up a formula for the standard error of the difference between two standard deviations he would have to have recourse to a weightier tome.

ELIOT SLATER.

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